



March 4, 2013

The Honorable Tim Bishop
Ranking Member, House Water Resources Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Bishop:

On behalf of Sierra Club's 2.1 million members and supporters, I write in support of the Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act. This bill would help communities to address wastewater pollution that threatens people's health and our environment while creating jobs.

America's wastewater infrastructure is badly in need of repair, but existing investments are inadequate to address current pollution problems or to account for an increasing volume of wastewater, particularly during wet weather. The magnitude of the funding challenge is enormous; in the 2008 Clean Water Needs Survey, states documented about \$300 billion in wastewater infrastructure needs over the next 20 years.

Failing to maintain our wastewater infrastructure puts at risk the progress we've made in cleaning up lakes, rivers and coastal waters. The EPA estimates, for example, that Combined Sewage Overflows discharge more than 850 billion gallons of untreated wastewater and stormwater annually into surface water. Untreated and inadequately treated sewage causes millions of cases of illness each year as people are exposed to bacteria, viruses and parasites.

The Water Quality and Job Creation Act would take important steps to help states and communities meet their wastewater infrastructure needs. First, it authorizes \$13.8 billion for the Clean Water State Revolving Funds over the next five years. Recognizing the costs that wastewater infrastructure projects can impose, the bill would subsidize communities and individual ratepayers that would experience economic hardship because of potential rate increases. Importantly, the bill provides incentives for innovative green infrastructure and water and energy efficiency improvements.

In addition to the traditional State Revolving Fund funding, the bill recognizes the need for innovative, long-term wastewater infrastructure funding sources. It establishes a Clean Water Trust Fund and authorizes the Congressional Budget Office to study revenue sources and funding mechanism to generate about \$10 billion per year. In addition, it establishes a direct

loan and loan guarantee program modeled after the financing mechanism under the surface transportation projects.

While Sierra Club is primarily concerned about the public health and water quality benefits this legislation would produce, increased funding for wastewater infrastructure could create construction, equipment-manufacturing and engineering design jobs that would help our still-recovering economy.

Sierra Club appreciates your leadership in protecting the nation's waters and looks forward to working with you and others to pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Hopkins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Ed Hopkins
Director, Environmental Quality Program